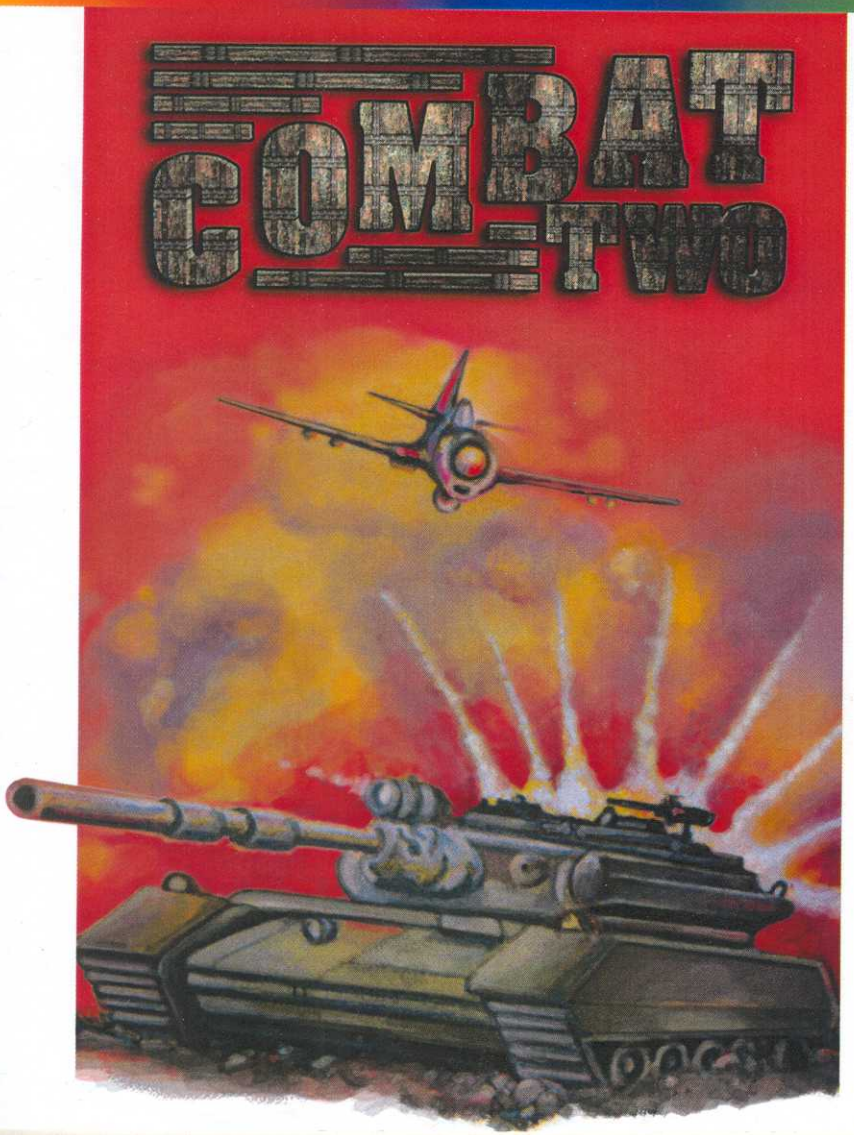
ATARI® 2600™



COMBAT TWO

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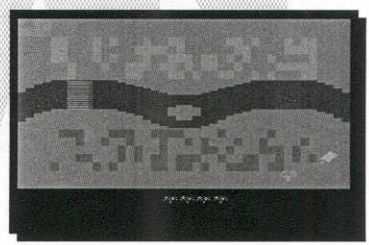


STORY

GAME OBJECTIVE

The year is 2037. Mankind has finally tired of fighting massive wars with millions senselessly slaughtered. All this has been replaced by a new kind of warfare: The Combat Duels. Any time diplomacy between two nations fails, they decide the conflict via the duels.

Combat Duels are battles between two individuals on a virtual battlefield, but they are not playing just for themselves -- they represent their entire nation. All major nations have approved the Duels as a means of resolving conflicts.

These individuals are merely called combatants, but they've trained hard and fought thousands of test duels to earn the right to be the champions for their nations.

Combat Two will put you in the role of such a combatant, a mighty hero of the virtual battlefield. Prove to your country that you are the chosen one and lead them to victory! If you fail and disgrace your country, your fellow citizens won't be harmed, but they may harm you for losing!

THE VIRTUAL BATTLEFIELD

The virtual battlefield is a rectangular arena which cannot be exited by the combatants until one has been defeated. The arena is a simulation of realistic battlefields, including woods or fortifications, as well as a river that divides the battlefield into two halves, connected by bridges. Like a real battlefield, some areas cannot be traversed, and some areas will provide cover from the enemy's shells.

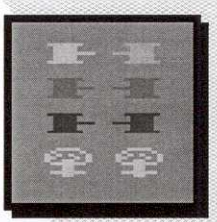
Combatants' bases are located in opposite corners, northwest and southeast. From these bases you can attack the enemy with your mighty tank and surface-to-surface missiles. Plan your actions carefully and take advantage of the terrain to overwhelm your opponent.

GAME PLAY

The objective of Combat Two is to destroy the enemy's task force. Each combatant has two weapons systems and a base at their disposal.

TANK

The main battle tank is your most important war machine. The enemy's base can only be destroyed by this weapon. Due to its massive armor, the tank can not destroyed by a single direct hit – but if it suffers a second hit, it will blow up.



Tank status color code for both players

At the beginning of the battle each side has four tanks, but combatants can only command one tank at a time. The remainder of the tanks remain in the base as backup and are destroyed if the base is destroyed.

Tanks can travel through the woods and the water, but this terrain will slow them down considerably.

SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILE

This weapon is used specifically to destroy an enemy tank. Once the missile is launched it will home in on an enemy tank. But, it can only be launched from a tank while it is sheltered within its own base. Once a base is destroyed, missiles can no longer be launched. It takes time to reload this weapon, so there is a delay before you can launch a second missile.

BASE

The base has three functions, as described above: (1) it provides cover to a tank within its walls; (2) it holds the remaining backup tanks; and (3) it allows tanks to launch their missiles.

It is important to protect your base! Without missiles and spare tanks, your enemy has the upper hand!

GAME CONTROLS

USING THE CONTROLLER

Use the joystick to maneuver your tank, holding the controller with the red button to your upper left, toward the television screen. For player 1 plug the joystick firmly into the LEFT controller jack at the back of your console; for player 2 plug the joystick into the RIGHT controller jack.

CONTROLLING YOUR TANK

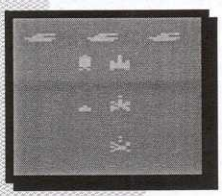
To move your tank in a specified direction on the screen, push your joystick in the same direction. A tank moving backwards is considerably slower than a tank moving forward. Press the red button to fire the main gun of your tank.

FIRING THE SURFACE-TO-SURFACE MISSILE

To launch the Surface-to-Surface Missile, press the red button when (a) your tank is in your own base, and (b) the missile is armed.

PLAYER STATUS DISPLAY

This display shows the complete status of a player. In the first row you see the remaining number of tanks. The left column shows the two states of the missile (1. ready to fire, 2. reloading) and the right column the three different states of the actual tank (from no damages to heavy damages).



CONSOLE CONTROLS

GAME SELECT/GAME LEVELS

Press the GAME SELECT switch to choose one of four arenas. Arenas will feature either wooded terrain or fortifications, and will be configured randomly or by the combatants themselves.

DIFFICULTY SWITCHES/TV TYPE SWITCH

The DIFFICULTY switches and TV TYPE switch have no function in the game.

GAME RESET

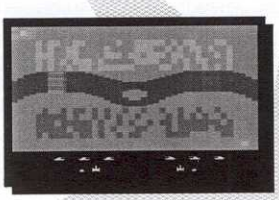
In Game 1 and Game 2 press GAME RESET to start the game. In Game 3 and Game 4, press GAME RESET once to place woods or fortifications, and when finished, press it a second time to start the battle with the customized battlefield.

GAME VARIATIONS

GAME NUMBER

Game 1

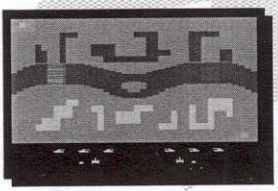
Wooded Battlefield



Woods will be placed randomly around the battlefield after each GAME RESET. Combatants may move through the woods. Woods can also be destroyed by tank shells.

Game 2

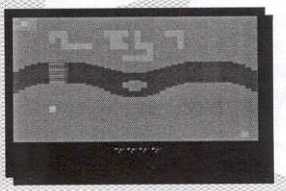
Fortified Battlefield



Fortifications are always the same. Combatants cannot move through them – they must go around them, or destroy them with tank shells.

Game 3

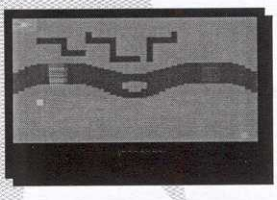
Wooded Battlefield (designed)



At the beginning of this game, woods can be placed onto the battlefield by the combatants themselves. To start the game after the setup is complete GAME RESET has to be pushed. Otherwise this game is the same as Game 1.

Game 4

Fortified Battlefield (designed)



At the beginning of this game, foritfications can be placed onto the battlefield by the combatants themselves. To start the game after the setup is complete GAME RESET has to be pushed. Otherwise this game is the same as Game 2.

STRATEGIES

KNOW THE TERRAIN. Tanks move fast on clear terrain and bridges, but slow through woods and water. They cannot move through fortifications. Keep this in mind as you travel the battlefield.

STRIKE FIRST, STRIKE HARD. Try to hit the enemy before they hit you, and don't let them get away before you hit them a few more times.

DIVERSIFY YOUR ATTACKS. Confuse your enemy by launching a missile when they least expect it.

STAY CALM. Plan your actions well and don't get fazed when the enemy surprises you.

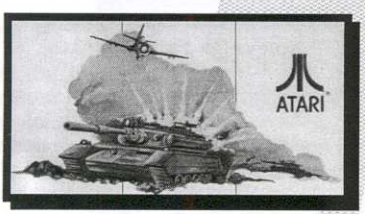
PRACTICE. Practice even when you don't have a combatant to fight against. Get used to the terrain and the controls.

APPENDIX

A

Original Artwork

There are only two original artwork sketches to COMBAT TWO:



ATARI CATALOG 1982 REV. E.

ATARI CATALOG 1982 REV. F.
(thanks to Scott Stilphen)

B

Review of COMBAT TWO by Keita Iida (Atari Gaming Headquaters, http://www.atarihq.com)

It's time to make another periodic update to your Atari 2600 game list, because yet another prototype cartridge has been uncovered from the grave: Combat Two. When you think about it, it's really mind-boggling. We don't often hear about too many NES, Sega Master System, or ColecoVision games being discovered, yet it seems that prototype Atari titles are turning up at an astonishing rate... even over fifteen years after the fact.

The eagerly awaited sequel to the original 2600 pack-in cartridge, Combat Two never made it out for the machine. Say what you may about the old, first generation game -- we loved it then and still adore it now. Tons of game variations featuring bi-planes, tanks, and even the option for bank shots, and simple yet addicting two-player action made for more restless nights than we care to admit. Although playable in its current form, we are guessing that COMBAT TWO was in its early stages of development. Game options are few, and only tanks are playable in this sequel.

You get a choice of three somewhat different screens, but the goal remains the same -- blast your opponent before he gets you. Each player starts at opposite corners of the screen. The player basically makes his way through the terrain - and sometimes some obstacles depending on which game you play - while making his way toward his foe. There's a large river that divides each players' territory but it does not affect the movement of the tanks in any way. The only noticeable on-screen environment that factors into play are the barriers (or walls) that block the path and shot of the tanks. As in the original Combat, they can be used as strategic hideouts as well as temporary repreives when you're under agressive attack. Overall, however, the outcome of your battle is more or less contingent on your ability to aim and shoot your cannon. Without taking under account that this game is probably not in its final form, Combat Two is disappointing. Graphics are hardly an improvement over its predecessor. The variety is lacking with no options for such cool features like invisible tanks, bank shots and planes. Finally, it seems like Atari tried more for a simulation feel with this one, and lost much of the high-action fun of the first Combat in the process.

C

The origin of the COMBAT TWO prototype?

Steve Morgenstern, the former editor of ATARI AGE wanted to sell some of his prototypes which he got during his time at ATARI AGE. I was lucky be informed by a fellow collector about this and got in contact with Steve. After some negotiating I ended up buying some prototypes from him, among others Combat Two (at that time one of a kind).

D

What's the idea behind the (re-)releasing of games like COMBAT TWO?

Several factors influenced me to release a production version of the Combat II prototype I own. I felt that Atari fans should have the opportunity to experience this nearly-finished game that has so much historical significance. In addition, certain prototypes deserve to be treated

with tender loving care, and Combat II is definitely among them. Although its gameplay might not live up to everyone's high expectations -- especially considering the high water mark set by its predecessor -- it is nonetheless an important part of video gaming history. My goal was to produce the game with high quality packaging and labels that would do the game justice, and to provide somewhat of a feeling for nostalgists that they were back in 1983 again... at the day they may have purchased an actual Combat II cartridge had Atari actually released it.
- Marc Oberhäuser
Retrodesign

E

Web Resources

Atari Gaming Headquarters
http://www.atarihq.com/

Atari Age
http://www.atariage.com/

2600 Connection
http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Lair/9260/

Atari Historical Society
http://www.atari-history.com/

Digital Press Online
http://www.digitpress.com/

Rolenta Press
http://www.rolentapress.com/

F

Contributors and friends

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Print Production, Bill Houlehan of O'Shea, Chris Wilkson, Cornelius Nork and my Dad (Production support)

G

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COMBAT TWO

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